Public Water Access in Minnesota:
The Minnesota DNR State Parks and Trails water recreation program provides approximately 1,650 boat accesses, over 365 fishing piers and shore fishing sites and manages 35 designated Water Trials in Minnesota. The DNR, Federal Government and local communities operate boat accesses. See the table on the right for specific site information. The DNR boating programs are funded by use fees including boat license & gas tax related to marine use.

Public accesses are usually open 24 hours unless otherwise posted. Most sites have launch ramps but some sites, especially on smaller rivers, are open only in the summer. Bathrooms and docks are usually located on the larger and busier sites.

Public Water Access Rules - The launch area must be kept clean and the following activities are unlawful: littering, camping, fishing, building fires, and consuming alcohol. See Minnesota Rules, chapter 6218 for complete rules.

Boating in Minnesota:

The annual Minnesota Boating Guide summarizes Minnesota's boating laws and regulations in an easy-to-read format. The guide supplies information about operating watercraft on the state's lakes and rivers. Operator age restrictions apply to operators 17 years old and younger.

Licensing - All motorized and non-motorized watercraft must be licensed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Please contact the DNR License Bureau for information.

Fishing in Minnesota:

Fishing Regulations and Licensing - All persons 16 and older are required to have the appropriate license with them when fishing. Licenses are available through the DNR License Bureau, most County Auditors and many stores that sell fishing related goods. Trout fishing requires a trout stamp. For more information call the DNR Information Center at (651) 296-6157 or 1-888-MN-LICENSE (665-4236).

Selective Harvest Fishing - Improved technology and increased fishing have caused the quality of fishing to decline in many waters. Practicing "Selective Harvest" offers anglers an opportunity to take some fish home while releasing others back into the water to improve fishing quality. Here are some tips to use for effective Selective Harvest Fishing:

- Use barbless hooks.
- Play the fish quickly and handle the fish carefully.
- Never hold the fish by the eyes.
- Use a needle nose pliers to remove hooks or cut the line if it is too deep.
- Ease the fish back into the water, do not throw it back.

Safe Boating:

Life Jackets - On all boats (except a sailboat) regardless of length there must be a readily accessible Coast Guard approved wearable life jacket for each person on board. In addition, on boats 16 feet or longer, except canoes and kayaks, when motor aided at least one Coast Guard approved throwable device, such as a ring buoy or sea成立on.

Boating While Intoxicated (DWI) - Boating while intoxicated is illegal. For persons found to be under the influence there are significant penalties, including fines and possible jail sentences.

Personal Watercraft - Special laws apply including wearing a life jacket and operating at a no wake speed at certain distances from other watercraft, swimmers and other objects in the water. Operator age restrictions also apply. Consult the Boating Guide for more information. A DNR safety electric is available free of charge.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Laws and Requirements:

The DNR lists lakes and rivers as "infested" with certain aquatic invasive species.

If you are harvesting bait, commercial fishing, or divesting or taking water, you might need to follow special regulations in infested waters.

To identify an infested water, look for orange Invasive Species Alert signs at the boat launch. You can also use LakeFinder to find out if a particular lake is listed as infested: mndnr.gov/lakefinder. For more information about infested waters, including an up-to-date infested waters list and additional location information, visit mndnr.gov/invasives.

Before leaving the water access or shoreline property, you MUST:

- Clean it ALL aquatic piers and animals.
- Drain all water including bags, barrels, barrels, bait buckets, motor and ballast tanks.
- Bare all plug and enclosure it out.

Get into the habit of taking these three simple steps, and it will soon become part of your routine. Pull away from the boat ramp area. Check for and remove plants while胯oping the boat down. Pull the plug when adjusting the motors. If you have other people (especially kids) with you, have them help! Adding a few minutes will help safeguard our waters.

Cleaning water-related equipment is just as important as cleaning boats, so while you’re cleaning your boat, please remember to also:

- Clean anchors, ropes, fishing tackle, and other objects that were in the water. Many species can be transported in the mud or in fishing lines and rope.
- Dump water out of canoes, kayaks, and other watercraft before leaving.

These are YOUR waters and it is YOUR responsibility to inspect, clean, and drain your boats!

AIS Bait Laws:

It is illegal to transport lake and river water. To save your bait (minnows or leeches), the DNR recommends bringing “fish water” treated water from home and keeping it in your vehicle or cooler. Bring water in a good sealable bag on ice or cool it down.

DO NOT dump unwanted bait into water bodies or on the shoreline! Unwanted bait belongs in the trash or a designated compost bin. Unwanted worms must be disposed of in the trash.

Work Together to Protect the Waters:

Watercraft inspectors are here to ensure watercraft and equipment are “clean in, clean out!” If you need assistance, have questions about the laws, or are curious about the program, please ask!

Ways you can help the Watercraft Inspectors:

- Please clean your boat and plug your plug as soon as you are safely able.
- Bring water from home and keep it in your vehicle or cooler.
- In Division of Inland Fisheries waters, please follow all the instructions given by the inspectors, for your safety and theirs. They will be only as long as to ask questions and want them work from a safe distance.

Ways the Watercraft Inspectors can help you:

- Inspectors have tools, sweeping sticks, and other equipment. Inspectors have tools, sweeping sticks, and other equipment. They may have grabing tools for plants.

When you see the Watercraft Inspectors, please be cooperative. The law requires compliance with inspectors, and it will help everyone to be on their way in a timely and pleasant manner.